

Foster Parents and Caregivers

Changing Lives One Child at a Time

March 2007



For all you who have opened your homes – and your hearts – to children, we say thank you.

NEW! Foster Parent Critical Support and Retention Home Based Services

Are you a foster parent providing care to a child with sexually reactive, physically assaultive or other high-risk behaviors? Additional support for you may help maintain the child's placement in your home. Short term support services are now available in your home to help manage the child's challenging behaviors. Professional contractors will respond to you within 24 hours of referral to the service by the child's social worker. Supports include:

- assessment of behavioral risk and safety of the child
- development of safety and supervision plans
- analysis of the identified "high risk behaviors"
- development and use of a behavior management plan in your home, including services and needs identified by you and the child
- consultation to implement the plan
- education/training in your home to manage the behaviors.
- 24/7 crisis response for the period of the service (three months)

Children's Administration has contracted with private providers for these services.

For more information regarding this service now available in Regions 1, 3, 4 and 5 contact the child's social worker.

As the services become available in Regions 2 and 6, social workers will be notified of the availability and you will be provided an update in the next newsletter. In the meantime, it doesn't hurt to ask!

SAVE THE DATE! Make it Happen – The College Experience!

- When: August 7 through 10th, 2007
- Who: Washington State Foster Youth who are:
 - Interested in learning about college.
 - Recognized as a dependent youth in Washington State, federal or tribal out-of-home care.
 - Currently a sophomore, junior, or senior in high school or enrolled in or graduated from a GED program.
- What: 4-day, 3-night college campus experience
- Where: University of Puget Sound, Tacoma
- Why: Exposure to college life, scholarship resources, and more
- How: Get more information! Youth should apply now: www.collegesuccessfoundation.org/makeithappen
Application deadline is April 2, 2007

The youth's caregiver/foster parent or social worker or Independent Living Case Manager can provide the recommendation for the youth to participate. There is no cost to the youth or caregiver.

Calling All Foster Parents

If you are a Washington State foster parent you will be receiving a letter from Washington State University (WSU) sometime in March or April about an important upcoming survey. The survey is being conducted by Children's Administration for the Braam Settlement, and the purpose is to ensure that foster parents are getting the training and support that they need to care for their children. The results of the survey will be shared with Children's Administration and will also be available on the Braam Panel web site at: <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/braampanel/> which has more information about the survey and how the results will be used. Foster parents will be contacted by telephone for the survey, and you may schedule a best time to complete the survey. The interviewer will ask that the main caregiver in each household complete the survey, and we hope you will be willing to take the time to participate in this survey and tell us what you think about training and support of foster parents in Washington State.

To ensure the survey results remain anonymous, the survey is being conducted by Washington State's University's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC), which will not collect any identifying information, and will only report summary results of the survey. The survey results will be used by the Braam Panel and by DCFS (Children's Administration) to identify ways of improving the training and support provided to foster parents. If you have questions about the survey or about your participation, please feel free to contact SESRC at their toll free telephone number (1-800-932-5393) and ask to speak to the Braam survey coordinator, or by email at sesrcweb1@wsu.edu. Thanks in advance for your help!

2007 Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference

Planning is underway for the 2007 Conference. This year's conference will be held September 23, 24 and 25, 2007 in Ocean Shores at the Ocean Shores Convention Center. We are especially looking for foster parents and relative caregivers in Region 6 to help us plan and deliver the best conference ever. Subcommittees currently are forming for fundraising, entertainment, goodie bags, brochure, evaluation, regional meetings and vendors. If you would like to participate in the planning committee, please contact Michael Luque at (360) 902-7986 or via email at lumi300@dshs.wa.gov. Watch for more information in the monthly Newsletters.

FYI – Foster Care Payments and Rate Assessment for Children in Licensed Foster Care Homes

Foster parents receive a set monthly reimbursement for the child's care based on the child's age. This reimbursement is for the child's care including food, clothing, and housing.

Q. When does a Foster Care Rate Assessment occur?

A. When a child is first placed in the foster home, when a child moves to a new foster home, when the payment authorizations are due for renewal or when there has been a significant change in circumstances for the child or foster parent.

Q. What is being assessed?

A. The child's level of need and the foster parents time in meeting that need.

Q. How often is the foster care rate assessment completed for a child?

A. The assessment must be completed within 30 days of the initial placement and at least every six months after that.

Q. How is the foster care rate assessment completed?

A. The child's social worker should complete the rate assessment in conjunction with you, the foster parent. The questionnaire takes an average of 30 – 45 minutes. Completing the assessment together provides an opportunity for the child's social worker and you to discuss how the child is doing and plan for additional services the child may need.

Q. How will I know what the outcome of the rate assessment is?

A. The social worker will mail a copy of the assessment and the payment plan to you, but also may call you and discuss the assessment outcome.

Q. What if I don't agree with the outcome of the assessment?

A. You should first talk with the child's social worker. If there is continued disagreement about the outcome of the assessment, you should talk with the supervisor of the social worker, then the Area Administrator. If resolution is not achieved, the Regional Administrator should be contacted.

For more information about the rate assessment process, please contact your foster child's social worker.

Important Resources and Numbers

Important numbers to know when you take care of children in out of home care:

Support for foster parents under investigation for allegations of abuse or neglect: **Foster Parent Investigation Retention Support Team (FIRST)** 253-219-6782. Monday through Saturday, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., or leave a message and receive a return call within 24 hours.

Support systems for foster parents

Under contracts with the state, three private agencies are working to build support for you within the foster care community. Support systems such as hubs, support groups and matching new foster parents with veteran foster parents are being built. To get connected:

- If you live in eastern Washington, the Olympic Peninsula down through Pacific County or from Thurston County to Clark County, call 1-888-794-1794.
- If you live in King County, call 206-605-0664 and in any county from Snohomish County north, call 360-510-7601 or 360-863-6530.
- If you live in Pierce or Kitsap counties, call 253-473-9252.

General foster parent information for the state of Washington/FPAWS: **Foster Parent Association of Washington State**, 1-800-391-CARE (2273) or www.fpaws.org. FPAWS is seeking new members and supporting foster parents in many ways, including referrals to local associations.

Family Help Line: 1-800-932-HOPE or www.parenttrust.org. The Family Help Line is a free, statewide training and referral line for the families of Washington State. Last year, the Family Help Line received over 5,000 calls and requests for information. Calls can last up to 90 minutes and parents can call as often as needed.

Foster Parent and Caregiver Crisis and Support Line: 1-800-301-1868.

Mental Health Crisis Line Information: The crisis line telephone number for your county or region is available on the DSHS Mental Health Division website at: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/mentalhealth/crisis.shtml>

Kitsap and Pierce County information about becoming a foster parent or to receive foster parent support: Foster Care Resource Network, 253-473-9252. Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or leave a message and receive a return call by the next business day.

Children's Administration Foster Parent Website and Foster Parent Training Website

Trainings are open to all licensed foster parents, licensed relative caregivers and unlicensed relative caregivers.

For information about foster parent and caregiver training <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>

Children's Administration Foster Care Listserv

Join the 400 people who have subscribed to the List Serve <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=fosterparents&&A=1> for information regarding new resources for the work you do in caring for children, information on parenting and resources to support you and the children in your care.

NEW – Resource Available Statewide

Get connected to information on resources in your area by calling 211- a toll free number.